

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings:

1-79. (cancelled)

80. (withdrawn) A method in a distributed system comprised of a plurality of lookup services with associated network services and a client lookup manager, the method comprising the steps of: receiving a reference to one of said plurality of lookup services; and storing said reference on said client lookup manager.

81. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 80, further comprising: identifying at least one network service associated with the lookup service; and storing a reference to said network service on said client lookup manager.

82. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 80, further comprising: identifying at least one network service associated with the lookup service; and storing said network service on said client lookup manager.

83. (currently amended) A method ~~in a distributed system, said system comprising a plurality of lookup services with associated network services, and a client computer having a client lookup manager with an associated cache, the method~~ comprising the steps of the client lookup manager:

receiving, at a client lookup manager, from the a client computer, a request to access a network service, said client lookup manager having an associated cache, said client computer being an element of a distributed system, said distributed system comprising a plurality of lookup services with associated network services; and the client look up manager;

searching the associated cache for a service reference associated with an instance of the requested network service;

returning, when said searching step is successful, the instance of the requested network service to the client computer;

sending, when said searching step is unsuccessful, a request for the service reference to a lookup service, said service reference identifying the requested network service, said request including an integer argument representing a desired maximum number of matches to said service reference that should be returned; and

~~storing received responses to said request~~ returned service references in the associated cache.

84. (currently amended) The method according to claim 83, wherein the searching step further comprises searching a table of the plurality of lookup services and the associated network services for the requested ~~network services~~ service references.

85. (withdrawn) A method in a distributed system comprised of a plurality of lookup services with associated network services and a client lookup manager with an associated cache, the method comprising the steps of: receiving a request to access a network service; transmitting said request to at least one of said plurality of lookup services, provided a reference to said network service is not stored in the cache; and retrieving a reference to a lookup service associated with the requested network service.

86. (withdrawn) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system to perform a method for accessing network services, the data processing system having a software cache and a plurality of lookup services available for use in the data processing system, the method comprising the steps of: receiving a reference to one of said plurality of lookup services; and storing said reference on said client lookup manager.

87. (withdrawn) The computer-readable medium according to claim 86, further comprising: identifying at least one network service associated with the lookup service; and storing a reference to said network service on said client lookup manager.

88. (withdrawn) The computer-readable medium according to claim 86, further comprising: identifying at least one network service associated with the lookup service; and storing said network service on said client lookup manager.

89. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium containing instructions which, ~~when executed on a data processing system having an associated cache, cause the data processing system to perform a method for accessing network services, the data processing system communicatively coupled to a plurality of lookup services; encoded thereon for a data client lookup manager to implement a method, the method comprising the steps of the data processing apparatus:~~

receiving, at a client lookup manager, from a client computer, a request to access a network service, said client lookup manager having an associated cache, said client computer being an element of a distributed system, said distributed system comprising a plurality of lookup services with associated network services; and the client look up manager;

searching the associated cache for a service reference associated with an instance of the requested network service;

returning, when said searching step is successful, the instance of the requested network service to the client computer;

sending, when said searching step is unsuccessful, a request for the service reference to a lookup service, said service reference identifying the requested network service, said request including an integer argument representing a desired maximum number of matches to said service reference that should be returned; and

storing ~~received responses to said request~~ returned service references in the associated cache.

90. (currently amended) The computer-readable storage medium according to claim 89, wherein the searching step further comprises searching a table of the plurality of lookup services and associated network services for the requested ~~network service~~ service references.

91. (withdrawn) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system to perform a method for accessing network services, the data processing system having a software cache and a plurality of lookup services available for use in the data processing system, the method comprising the steps of: receiving a request to access a network service; transmitting said request to at least one of said plurality of lookup services, provided a reference to said network service is not stored in the cache; and retrieving a reference to a lookup service associated with the requested network service.

92. (currently amended) A distributed system comprising:

a server computer with a lookup service having references to a plurality of network services; and

a client computer including a client lookup manager with an associated cache, wherein said client lookup manager:

receives, from the client computer, a request to access a network service;

searches the associated cache for a service reference associated with an instance of the requested network service;

returns, when said searching step is successful, the instance of the requested network service to the client computer;

sends, when said searching step is unsuccessful, a request for the service reference to the lookup service, said service reference identifying the requested network service, said request including an integer argument representing a desired maximum number of matches to said service reference that should be returned, to the server; and

stores received responses to said request returned service references in the associated cache.

93. (withdrawn) A distributed system having a first computer with a client, a client lookup manager with an associated cache, and a second computer with a lookup service containing

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service references for accessing associated network services, the distributed system comprising: means for receiving a reference to one of said plurality of lookup services; and means for storing said reference on said client lookup manager.